



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

FEBRUARY 9, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

| NAME | TITLE | STATUS | ARRIVED |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|---------|
| Dan Bartman | Designated Co-Chair | <i>Present</i> | |
| Cortney Kirk | Designated Co-Chair | <i>Present</i> | |
| Frank Valdes | Member | <i>Present</i> | |
| Deborah Fennick | Member | <i>Present</i> | |
| Andrew Arbaugh | Member | <i>Present</i> | |
| Heidi Cron | Member | <i>Present</i> | |
| Tim Talun | Member | <i>Present</i> | |

The meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Co-Chair, Luisa Oliveira at 6:03pm and adjourned at 7:40pm. As authorized by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, Co-Chair and Director of Planning & Zoning Sarah Lewis designated Senior Planner Daniel Bartman to serve as Co-Chair in her place for this meeting. Co-Chair & Director of Public Space & Urban Forestry Luisa Oliveira designated Cortney Kirk to serve as Co-Chair in her place for this meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes Approval

The Board approved the minutes from December 22, 2020.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve.

DESIGN REVIEW: 28 Chestnut Street

Amanda Keefe, Douglas Gensler, Chris Pachois, Cody Klein, and Jennifer Schultz of the project team were all present. Douglas Gensler noted that 28 Chestnut and 28 Fitchburg are two buildings on two parcels, but will be integrated in design and project. Mr. Gensler went over the development team & project narrative. He noted that the building is LEED Platinum and talked about design inspiration for building, including the industrial past of the area. He spoke about the transportation connections nearby, including the poor pedestrian experience on Chestnut and Fitchburg. The applicant is proposing a 13' front setback to create a sidewalk and they have pushed the penthouse back to reduce the massing on Chestnut Street.

The applicant reviewed 3 façade options:

- Option 1 - masonry on ground floor, blue patina metal integrated above, shiplap zinc panels on upper floors.
- Option 2 - brick on bottom, shiplap on top, integrating steel, and a metal mesh sun shade.
- Option 3 (their preferred option) – glass curtain wall, steel, shiplap, brick, and solar sunshades.

The applicant then gave a basic overview of the landscaping design elements and bike lane placement.

The Commission and the applicant discussed the forthcoming Civic Space, the storm water retention plan, and the possible connection to the Community Path and Innerbelt Road. They also spoke about the location of the building entry, as well as the proposed uses of the ground floor. Staff confirmed that there is no ACE requirement, however the applicant confirmed that they were considering including some maker space in the building.

The discussion continued with the Commission and applicant speaking in depth about possible building materials to bring out the artistic nature of the neighborhood. The Commission Members proposed incorporating a warmer pallet and how to better integrate more brick into the design. They confirmed that they preferred Option 3, but would like to see more unique variety in the design. They also touched upon the inclusion of the Civic Space in the overall design.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue to a future regularly scheduled meeting.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

DESIGN REVIEW: 28 Fitchburg Street

This building is on the corner of Fitchburg Street and Chestnut Street, adjacent to the Brickbottom Artist Loft Building. It had the same principals as 28 Chestnut with similar massing and articulation.

The applicant reviewed 3 façade options:

- Option 1 – grey brick on ground floor, copper patina metal integrated above, bi-fold overhead loading dock door, and standing seam wall panel.
- Option 2 – red brick on bottom, aluminum fascia/coping - dark grey anodized, standing seam wall panel, metal mesh sun shade, a bi-fold overhead loading dock door, and more window expression.
- Option 3 (their preferred option) – grey brick, aluminum fascia/coping - dark grey anodized, standing seam wall panel, metal mesh sun shade, and a bi-fold overhead loading dock door.

The applicant then gave a basic overview of the landscaping design elements and parking.

The Commission and the applicant discussed the amount and placement of parking, as well as the need for three garage bay doors. The applicant confirmed that the residents expressed a desire for more parking. The Commission Members were concerned about the existing Brickbottom residents' views of the proposed building. The Commission suggested that the corner of Chestnut and Fitchburg would potentially be a good place for art and a public space. The applicant noted that the residents asked that Fitchburg Street remain quiet, without a lot of traffic or public space. However, as the neighborhood develops to the North, there will be series of open areas that bridge the newly created Community Path and Chestnut Street, which will benefit the residents.

The Commission also discussed how they felt the building was not Brickbottom specific and could be anywhere. They prefer to see design elements that feel more in tune with the neighborhood and less generic.

Designated Co-Chair Bartman noted that the options were to choose a preferred option or to continue and see feedback incorporated. The Commission confirmed that they would like the applicant to build on Option 3 for both buildings, but they want the design pushed further.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue to a future regularly scheduled meeting.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.